

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 ACDA-05 L-02 H-02 MC-02 EUR-12

EA-06 IGA-01 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00 OPIC-03 OMB-01

TRSE-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

INR-07 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /087 W

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O R 222049Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9835

SECDEFENSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 1610

STATE FOR PM/SAS, AND ACDA

REF: STATE 082288

1. UNTIL THE MID-1969 BORDER CONFLICT WITH EL SALVADOR, HONDURAS RELIED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON THE UNITED STATES FOR ITS MILITARY MATERIAL. THIS MATERIEL CONSISTED PRIMARILY OF SMALL ARMS, TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT, AND AMMUNITION. SUBSEQUENT TO THE CESSATION OF ARMED HOSTILITIES, HONDURAS ACQUIRED ARMS FOR VARIOUS WEST EUROPEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN SOURCES. OFFERS TO SELL WERE RECEIVED FROM CUBA, USSR, AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND NATIONALIST CHINA.

2. HONDURAS PURCHASED APPROXIMATELY 8 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF ARMS FROM THIRD COUNTRY SOURCES IN LATE 1969 THROUGH MID-1970. THE PRINCIPAL ITEMS OBTAINED WERE AS FOLLOWS:

ITEM	QUANTITY
(A) RIFLES, 7.62MM	8,000
(B) SMG, 9MM	1,100
(C) HOWITZER, 105MM	8

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(D) LMG, 7.62MM 200

(E) MORTAR, 120MM	38	
(F) MORTAR, 81MM	42	
(G) HOWITZER, 75MM PACK		6
(H) BOMBER, B-26	1	
(I) FIGHTER, F-86K	6	
(J) AMMUNITION	UNK	

3. THE ABOVE PURCHASES RESULTED IN A HETEROGENEOUS MIX OF ARMAMENTS WHICH HAVE PROVEN DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN. THE CURRENT QUALITY OF THE ITEMS IS CONSIDERED POOR, PRIMARILY AS THE RESULT OF LACK OF REPAIR PARTS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE HONDURAN AIR FORCE HAS YET TO FLY ONE OF THE SIX F-86S PURCHASED FROM VENEZUELA IN 1969. RECENT CASH PURCHASES FROM THE US INCLUDE SIX NEW A-37 AIRCRAFT AND 1,500 M-14 RIFLES. THE HONDURAN ARMED FORCES ARE EXPECTED TO REQUEST THE PRICE AND AVAILABILITY OF US 105MM HOWITZERS, 106MM RECOILESS RIFLES, 4.2MM AND 81MM MORTARS, AND ADDITIONAL M-14 RIFLES IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

4. CURRENTLY, THE HONDURAN ARMED FORCES STRENGTH IS APPROXIMATELY 12 THOUSAND PERSONNEL, CONSISTING OF 10 INFANTRY BATTALIONS, 2 ARTILLERY BATTALIONS, 1 COMBAT SUPPORT BATTALION, 1 ENGINEER BATTALION AND AN 800 MAN AIRFORCE. AS A RESULT OF THE 1969 WAR WITH EL SALVADOR THE HONDURAN ARMED FORCES PERCEIVE THE MAJOR THREAT AS EXTERNAL, AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO, UNTIL THE BORDER PROBLEM IS RESOLVED. THERE IS CURRENTLY NO POSITIVE INDICATION THAT THIS PROBLEM WILL BE RESOLVED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

5. HONDURAS HAS NOT LACKED OFFERS FOR ARMS SALES FROM THIRD COUNTRY SOURCES, AS INDICATED IN PARAGRAPH 1. HOWEVER, ALL SALES WERE PRIMARILY CASH PURCHASES WITH LITTLE OR NO GRANT AID OR OFFERS OF CREDIT. IF THE HONDURAN ARMED FORCES ARE FRUSTRATED IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO REPLACE OUTMODED ARMS AND EQUIPMENT FROM US SOURCES, THEY WILL READILY TURN TO THIRD COUNTRY SOURCES, AS PAST EVENTS HAVE BORNE OUT. THIS IS NOT TO IMPLY THAT HONDURAS IS ATTEMPTING TO INFLUENCE THE US TO EXTEND OR INCREASE GRANT MILITARY MATERIEL; HOWEVER, HONDURAS REMAINS INTERESTED IN THE TIMELY DELIVERY THROUGH CASH SALES AND/OR FMS CREDITS

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OF MATERIEL FROM THE US.
SANCHEZ

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Message Attributes

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